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The Focus

October, 1917

7/6

State Normal School
Farmville, Virginia



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THE FOCUS

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A True Heroine

She answered the call of her country's need,
And went to fight in the fray;
Not as the soldiers and sailors went,
But in quite a different way.

Her armor was courage, her sword was hope,
Which she thrust into many a heart.
Endued with strength and sustained by trust,
She seemed to fear for naught.

By her hands were deeds of mercy wrought,
By her presence comfort given;
For with her came the sunshine
And all the clouds were riven.

So here's to the world-wide Red Cross Nurse,
And here's to the path she trod,
For she was faithful and loyal and true,
To herself, her country, and God!

—*Birdie Hollowell.*

And Jim was the Cause of it All

"**T**ING, TANG, TING" went the rising bell. Betty turned over sleepily, tucked her red head under her arm, and went back to her pleasant dream of herself and Jim walking in a garden, yes, a garden full of roses. He was saying the sweetest, most endearing words, when suddenly, to her utter amazement, he turned and began to shake her and . . . and then she opened her eyes, and instead of dear old Jim, there stood her fat and homely room-mate.

"Betty, get up this minute. You know you have that Sociology test to study for, and you told me positively to wake you."

"What time is it? Just seven? Oh, goodness, I simply can't get up yet. I am so . . . sleepy and it is so cold, and . . ."

"But you must, Betty," interrupted Helen. "You don't know a thing about your Sociology and you'll get a note surely if you flunk on your test." The form under the bed clothes lay still and Helen turned away in disgust.

Betty, meanwhile, was just about to drop off to sleep again, when the deafening "ding, dong, ding" of the breakfast bell broke the stillness of the room. "Oh me!" she exclaimed, jumping out of bed. "Why didn't you tell me it was so late, Helen? I know I'll never get to breakfast, and—oh! Helen, where is my blouse? My gracious, there's not a drop of water. I'll have to go to the bath room." Grabbing her towel, she was out of the room and flying down the hall. On rounding a corner she bumped into a girl who was making her staid and stately way to her morning meal. Stopping only long enough to get herself righted, Betty ran on calling a "'scuse me" over her shoulder to the glaring and indignant girl behind. After what seemed to her many long minutes,

Betty ran back to her room. She gave her long, glistening hair several hard strokes with a brush and grabbing her tie and a bunch of hair pins she at last started on her way to breakfast, knotting her hair as she went. The doors were closing, but she slipped under Miss Mary's arm and, gasping for breath, she made her way to her table and flopped, breathless, into her chair.

"Well, Betty Randall, how on earth did you ever get here on time?" questioned Helen. "When I came down you hadn't even put your blouse on."

"Oh, that was an easy matter. I had pecks of time to what I have sometimes. Yes, Lucy, I want a cup of coffee this morning," she said, turning to the maid, "and maybe two for I need something to brace me up after —"

"I should say you do," interrupted Tom, Betty's chum, "for you've that Sociology test ahead of you and it's going to be a whopper, too."

"Oh, me! I had forgotten all about it and here it is breakfast and I have it the second period."

"Look out, Miss, you'll have this here coffee all over you if you don't look out," cautioned Lucy as Betty, in her excitement, knocked the cup, which she was holding, halfway out of its saucer. Mechanically, Betty set the coffee by her plate, and dismissing the thought of the Sociology test with a laugh, as she remembered that she had first period in which to study it, she began her breakfast.

"I am simply starved this morning, Margaret; do you want all your butter?" she called across the table to one of the girls.

"No, you may have half of it, but I want the other, myself, for a hot roll," answered that individual, taking some of the butter off her butter-plate and shoving the other across the table to Betty.

"Thank you ever so much. I'll remember you some day when you are in need."

"You know, Tom," exclaimed Betty a few minutes later, "I have a feeling in my bones that I am going to hear from Papa this morning, saying whether or not I can go to the V. P. I. hops. I am so excited I can hardly keep still. Oh, here comes Mary now with the mail. Whose day is it?"

"Mine," yelled Tom.

"Here 'tis, but please do hurry. I want a letter from Papa so bad. There it is now," she exclaimed joyfully a few moments later, as a big fat letter addressed in her father's hand was passed to her. Slitting the envelope with a hair pin, she pulled out the big, closely written pages.

"Oh, Tom," wailed Betty a few moments later, as they were slowly making their way from the dining room, "Papa says that I can't go to the hops. Listen to what he says.

"I would like very much to let you go to the dances at V. P. I., Easter, and I appreciate Jim's asking you, but I can not possibly let you attend them this year. However, I have planned something else for you which I think you will enjoy just as much as going to V. P. I. It is a trip to the Natural Bridge by motor. I have asked a friend of yours to go with us, but I am going to keep you guessing as to whom it will be. Your aunt Mary, of course, will accompany us."

"That is simply wonderful," exclaimed Tom, "but who is it you suppose that he is asking to go with you? Why, I bet it's Jim."

"No, I know it's not he, I only wish it were. You know he wouldn't leave V. P. I. now for a barrel of monkeys."

"Well, I shouldn't be a bit surprised. Anyway, you'll have a good old time. Your father is such a dear."

"I should say he is, and I think it is perfectly darling in him to plan this trip for me," she exclaimed brightly. However, inwardly, she couldn't rejoice so much as she thought she ought, for she kept

thinking to herself, "Now I won't see Jim for another six months. How *will* I ever stand it?" She went slowly up to her room, spread her bed, and spent the whole first period studying for her test. When the bell sounded for second period, *she made her way* very slowly and reluctantly to her Sociology. She was met at the door by a chorus of voices.

"Oh! Patty, aren't you scared green? The class before this said theirs was fierce."

"Patty," yelled another girl, "can you define Sociology? I can't remember it and I know he is going to ask it, 'cause he's always harping on it in class."

"Tom, if you love me, please tell me the difference between static and dynamic Sociology," Betty said desperately. "I simply can't get it into my head." Just as Tom was about to answer, in walked a rather stout man with a broad grin on his face.

"Now, please scatter as much as possible and prepare yourselves for your test. No, Miss Jones, I do not object to your writing on the back of your paper. Yes, you must use the Locker method in your writing or I'll have to turn your paper over to your writing teacher." Soon everybody was puckering her brows, trying her best to answer those short, but difficult problems on the board. Betty, being endowed with a vivid imagination and a share of good common sense, didn't have such a hard time after all, and she was ready to hand in her test with the rest when the bell rang. Chattering and laughing, the girls filed out of the room into the hall and around to chapel, where everybody was trying to give and receive as much information as possible before the bell rang for quiet. Betty was unusually quiet, and settled herself in her seat and seemed to be in a deep study. She tried to make herself feel happy over the trip, but Jim's big jolly face would always come before her and take all the joy out of it.

"Oh, why?" she whispered to herself miserably, "why can't I be happy over this as other girls would

be, and I've always wanted to take the trip, too. It's just Jim," she had to confess to herself finally. The mood was unusual for Betty. It continued several days, interrupted by sudden fits of gaiety. Finally, one day Tom met her on the hall and gave her a good shaking.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Betty Randall? You walk around here like somebody in a dream. You act like not being able to see Jim is the worst possible thing that could have happened to you. He hasn't asked another girl to the hops, has he?" she continued teasingly.

"No, of course he hasn't. He wouldn't do such a thing."

"Well cheer up, dearly beloved. You are going to a class that ought to fit in with your mood. The professor is going to lecture on adolescent love."

"Now, Tom Lavington, you must hush or I'll tell you a few things about the way you acted when you didn't hear from 'Bobby dear' for three weeks," she answered back spiritedly.

Tom didn't say another word, and the two went on into the class room. Hardly were they seated when Aunt Lou, the parlor maid, poked her head in the door.

"Is Miss Betty Randall in here?" she inquired.

"Yes. Miss Randall, you may be excused."

Betty almost ran out of the room, and took with trembling hands the yellow envelope, which Aunt Lou handed to her. At last, after what seemed to her an endless age she got it open and, in a dazed way, read:

"We'll arrive tomorrow to start the trip. Be ready."
Father.

The rest of the day fairly flew, and the next morning as she was going across the bridge to see one of her friends, she happened to glance toward the street. There she saw her father's car stop in front of the

school, and on the front seat of the machine sat the chauffeur, and another man, but not her father or her Aunt Mary. Remembering suddenly that she was not dressed to see any one, she lingered no longer, but flew back to her room. She quickly slipped into another dress and, while she was arranging her hair, a maid knocked at the door and told her there was someone in the sitting room to see her.

"Who do you reckon it can be?" questioned Helen.

"I can't imagine, unless it is a forty-fifth cousin of mine, who goes with us on lots of our trips. I do hope it isn't he, for he is the biggest pill that ever walked on this green earth. I'll tell you all about it later," she called back as she ran out of the door. She ran quickly down the steps and into the home office, thinking that perhaps he had left his card up there. No one was there, however, so waiting no longer, she walked on toward the sitting room, and hesitating only a second, she entered.

"Jim," she exclaimed joyously.

"Dear old Betty," roared that broad individual at the same time.

"But I thought you were at school," Betty said a few moments later.

"I was, but I left to go with a certain party on a little motor trip, and incidentally, to see a young lady named Betty."

"Oh, are you really going with us?"

"Yes. Your Aunt Mary and your father are down at the hotel now and we are to go down to meet them in a few minutes, but I *haven't* told you the bulliest part of our plan yet. I bet a dime you can't guess what it is."

"Please do hurry and tell me. I don't even want to guess," exclaimed Betty with shining eyes, her color coming and going.

"Well, by starting on our trip two days earlier, we will wind up at V. P. I. in time for the last but biggest dance of all."

"Oh!!!! Jim."

—Mary Addington.

Box One Hundred and Sixty-three

THE rain pattered gently on the window pane while the budding boughs danced up and down in the wind. This was about all Anne could see of the outside world from her seat by the infirmity cot. The drip, drip of the water under the eaves was a soothing sound, but Anne refused to be soothed any longer.

"Just think," she said to herself, "I have been here only five days and it seems like five months." A sharp pain shot thro' her ankle as she tried her left foot on the floor. "Ugh!" she exclaimed, wincing, "it nearly kills me to move it. When will I *ever* be able to walk again? I know I'll be over here for a month of Sundays. Yet it was good of Dr. Byrne to put me in the sun parlor—only it's mighty hard to forget it's raining when there are so many windows around. I wonder if it is going to rain until this sprain gets well?"

At this point the French door opened and there entered a figure—entirely black except for the whites of two eyes and a small apron.

"You didn't eat no dinner 'tall."

"I reckon I'm not hungry. The only thing in the world I want to eat right now is a big sour pickle. Couldn't you run over to Guillaume's and get me some, Beatrice?" Anne begged, jingling some coins in her hand.

"I name 'Be-atrice,' she corrected. "Now suh, I ain't goin' to git in no trouble. Dr. Byrne say she give y'all nuff to eat ovar hear, anyhow. Does you want dem letters to go off?"

"Horrors! I haven't finished this letter yet, and it ought to go off to Sarah today. Yes, Beatrice, I mean, Be-atrice, and please bring me some mail."

Anne resumed her letter, writing, as the maid pattered down the hall with her tray. Yes, Sarah

had been so faithful to her. She had written to her every day since she had heard of her sprained ankle. In her last letter she had said she was going to liven up things for Anne while she was in the infirmary. Well, a letter from Sarah every day did liven things up for Sarah did write such jolly letters.

The door opened again and this time it was Miss Van Alstyne, the nurse, who entered. "All for you," she said tossing a half dozen letters into the lap of the expectant Anne; and there is something else too—something you were asking for yesterday." Miss Van Alstyne brought out her other hand from behind her back and held out a package. "Your roommate just brought it over from the package line," and Miss Van Alstyne left Anne to her mail.

"It must be a book, for it looks like one, and it is what I have been wishing for, since I finished up all these over here. But who in the world sent it? I don't recognize the handwriting." By this time she had torn open the wrapping and disclosed a copy of "Molly Make-Believe."

"What luck! I've never read it! But there is no card." On the fly leaf was written, "From Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three, Raleigh, North Carolina."

"Of course it's from Sarah, for she's the only human being I know in Raleigh," she thought. "So this is the way she livens things up—but that handwriting—it had a bold, masculine stroke. Oh, well, Sarah had gotten one of her friends to address the package." She would be a good sport and thank "Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three."

Glancing thro' her mail, she saw that the letters were all those particular literary productions commonly known as infirmary notes, usually written at the dining-room table—hence the grease-spot decorations. After reading these thro', punctuating them with alternate sighs and chuckles, she abandoned all for "Molly Make-Believe."

"Why, it almost applies to me," she said, "only in the book it's the man who's an invalid. I only wish I didn't read so fast, but anyhow it will afford me an hour's amusement, at least, as well as lots of fun. The little element of mystery surrounding "Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three" does really thrill me just a little, even tho' I am sure it's nobody but Sarah."

The rest of the afternoon she spent in writing and tearing up letters, which she began as follows, "Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three, He, She, or It." At last, having composed one with which she was not wholly satisfied, but which suited better the thought than any she had written, she addressed and sealed the envelope.

It was several days before she heard again from the sender of "Molly Make-Believe." The letter came on the morning mail—a clever letter—in the same bold handwriting. It stated that a package was following. The package was to contain two things—both were for dreams—one was for the purely utilitarian side of life, the other for the romantic, one was to dream of, the other to dream upon.

"I'm simply thrilled to a peanut!" was all Anne could find to say and, sitting down, she scribbled a note to her room-mate telling her to get that package over to the infirmary right after she got it from the book-room. Anne could hardly wait for the two-fifteen bell to ring, but soon after the last tap the package was brought in. It was large and not at all like the first package in appearance. What on earth *could* it be? She tugged at the string and at last pulled out a traveling pillow and—but what was it? It was something in a tiny white box and wrapped in tissue paper—a piece of wedding cake!

"Oh! I see the connectoin now, but I can't possibly compete with Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three. It is entirely too clever for me. Anyhow, Dr. Byrne says I may leave in a day or so and then, perhaps, I won't be so dependent for amusement. It called me a

brave little soldier and I'm not at all. I've been fretting and fussing ever since I've been over here—but I just must write and thank It for that lovely pillow."

Several days later when Anne walked into the dining room, when all her friends rushed up to her and said how much they had missed her, she squeezed the hand of her room-mate and said:

"Kitty, I've got the most exciting thing to tell you, and we have another pillow for our window seat. I left it over in the infirmary with some other things."

"It really couldn't be any one but Sarah," said Anne as she finished the story, "because, you see, I don't know anyone else in Raleigh, and yet Sarah's letters have kept coming regularly, but you know that would be part of the game. Once, and only once, she mentioned something that made me certain that she is at the bottom of the whole matter. She said in her last letter she hoped my dreams had all been pleasant ones, and that settled it all with me."

"I'll tell you what you can do. Write and invite Sarah up to see you and if the letters continue to come, why just get it out of her who it is," said the scheming Kitty.

"I'll do that thing this very day, at my next vacant period," and as soon as dinner was over she rushed off to make her plans.

"Dear Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three," she wrote.

"At last I know how to address you, for I have come to the conclusion that you and Sarah are one and the same. Now I am out of the infirmary and I want so much to see you. Can't you come up for the next week-end? I am going to expect you and am making all arrangements to have you. Don't disappoint me. I have oodles of work to make up; am on my way to class now."

In several days Anne got the following telegram: "Will arrive in Farmville Friday afternoon. Can hardly wait for time to come.—Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three."

Anne met the five forty-nine train on Friday. As the train pulled out, she stood staring dazedly at the spot where the Pullman had stopped. "Well, she didn't come and I am furious. She did not even condescend to wire me," she said to herself.

The girls were leisurely strolling in to supper as Anne reached the campus. Brushing by some of her most intimate friends she hurried into the reception hall hoping that no one would question her, but Kitty was waiting for her.

"Why, Anne," she exclaimed, "where is Sarah?"

"I'm sure I don't know," snapped Anne, turning neither to the right nor the left.

At the table she calmed down, for she was hungry and the supper was unusually good. "Well, no movies for me tonight. I am going to write a letter and a long one at that," she said. "No, I don't believe I want to go to prayers. I had better do my writing while I am in the mood," she answered to Kitty's invitation.

At a few minutes past eight Aunt Sue knocked at Anne's door and handed her a card.

"Why what in the world is John Carter doing in Farmville?" she shrieked and going out in the hall whistled loudly. Kitty, who was visiting the girl next door, came out.

"Kitty, what do you think? One of my brother's old college friends is in town and has just sent up his card. How he found out I was here I don't know. He used to come down home to visit Bob when I was an infant. He used to jolly me along and call me his sweetheart, and I simply adored him. We always thought he was halfway in love with my older sister, but Alice was such a butterfly and always had a string of men hanging around. Bob hasn't heard from John Carter for several years—didn't even know where he was."

"Well," said Kitty, "I reckon I can put two and two together."

Anne stared at her uncomprehendingly, then—"Oh, Kitty, I forgot, Pattie Breckenridge has flossed off to V. M. I. with every decent dress I possess. Please lend me your gray frock," she said, and with the aid of all the available girls on the hall, Anne was soon ready.

"What does he look like?" yelled some of the girls over the rotunda rail as Anne reached the reception hall.

"As well as I can remember he is tall, dark, and good looking. If he isn't I'll come right back and tell you," she answered.

On entering the senior parlor, Anne decided that it would not be necessary for her to return at once to the girls. "I'm awfully glad to see you. How did this happen?" she began, thinking all the while how stiff she must be appearing.

"Didn't you get my telegram?" he inquired, coming forward.

"Your—your telegram," she stammered. "Then you are Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three?"

"Yes," he confessed, "and you see I just couldn't resist that invitation."

"How perfectly horrid of you," she jerked out. "This is the most humiliating experience I have ever had. Don't you know I'd never have invited you to see me?" she demanded.

"Of course not," he agreed. "I'll admit I got my invitation under false pretenses, but as long as I am already here, just try to put up with things as they are, won't you?"

"How long do you expect to be in town?" she asked icily.

"Well," he observed, "this is not a very warm welcome for an old friend of the family." Then—"Why I can stay as long as is necessary."

Anne was preparing a fiery retort when the humor of the situation struck her and she burst out with a hearty laugh, in which Carter joined.

"Of course," she said, puzzled, "you must have heard of me thro' Sarah, but how did it all happen?"

"Well, you see," he explained, "I have been stationed in Raleigh for several years. Sarah, you know, came out last winter and I used to see a great deal of her. She was talking to me one day about this friend of hers at Farmville and about your accident. When she mentioned your name we discovered that the friend was mutual. Of course I wanted to write at once, and so Sarah and I planned the Molly Make-Believe stunts and they worked beautifully. Your letters were peachy. Sarah showed me your picture and so you see I knew exactly how you looked after you had grown up. When your last letter came," he continued, "I took it up to Sarah and asked her to help me out. I knew the invitation was for her but (to use a much overworked expression) I knew the psychological moment had arrived for me to go to Farmville."

Several months later, when John Carter was leaving Farmville after a third visit, he asked Anne, standing in the doorway of the Senior parlor, "Will it seem queer to you, getting mail addressed to Box One Hundred and Sixty-Three?"

—*Helen Brent.*

The Meeting

THE silence of Death reigned over the French plains, where but a few hours before the air had been rent with the boom of cannon, the roar of explosions and the scream of shot rushing on its mission of destruction. Now the cold, impartial hand of Death had silenced forever both man and beast—French and Austrian, and the setting sun looked down with pity upon the scene. The great Mars had moved on, but he had left his mark behind in the red trail of blood.

Slowly and sadly the sun sank behind the distant hills, knowing that ere he should show his face again many a brave heart which yet beat with life would be stilled forever.

Here on this scene of horror, among the dead, mired in their own blood, a few yet lived—lived but to perish later. Over the field went up the groans and cries of those breathing their last.

"Water! in God's mercy, give me water!" It was the agonized plea of a dying soldier—what matter if he wore an Austrian uniform. Again and again came the cry, but who among these was there to minister to one lone man, where he lay with hundreds of his fellows in the last dreadful agonies.

And yet there was one who heard and started at the sound of his voice. It was a handsome youth in a French uniform, just a few feet away. He was painfully endeavoring to lift an all but empty canteen to his own parched lips when the cry reached his ears. There was something in the voice which compelled him to drop the vessel. He attempted to raise himself on his elbow in spite of the pain but only sank back in a swoon. It was the repetition of the cry which brought him to his senses, and with teeth set he raised himself to a sitting posture, forgetting

his own agony in the thought of his dying comrade. "There is yet a little water left," he thought, "and he has greater need of it than have I." With painful movements he half crawled, half rolled over the stiff bodies of the dead soldiers lying between him and his goal, and finally found himself, faint and half conscious, beside the Austrian. He was in the act of lifting the canteen to the other's lips when he saw, for the first time, that the man was his enemy; and he shrank away in scorn. Placing the vessel to his own lips, again, he was about to drink when the Austrian spoke: "Water! only for a few drops and I might live!"

What was there in the voice of this strange enemy that compelled him to lower the canteen? He gazed upon the other's features endeavoring to recall where he had seen them before, but so distorted with pain was the man's face that his own brother would hardly have recognized him. And yet there was something there which caused the Frenchman to resolve to share his water with this enemy.

So much was the dying man refreshed by the one small draft that with new life he raised his hand, and opening his eyes, gazed as if for one last look—not at his benefactor, but at a small cracked miniature which he held in his palm. At sight of the picture, the Frenchman started and snatched it almost roughly from his companion, gazing at it wonderingly and endeavoring with his confused brain to collect his thoughts. Slowly comprehension dawned and tenderly feeling in his own breast pocket he drew forth its mate—a small picture of a sweet, frail woman who smiled tenderly, yet sadly upon her son. With a sob he turned it over and read through his tears the inscription on the back—"To John, that he may keep his loving mother with him always." He turned from this picture to the other and observed, as he had supposed, the same words written "To Robert."

At sight of the familiar name there arose before him the picture of a young man leaving home—a young man, handsome yet wild, whose deeds of dissipation had driven the stern father to strenuous measures, such that the youth was ordered from home never to return until he should mend his ways. What became of the boy, John had never known, but rumors reached the bereaved family that he yet lived, somewhere among the Austrian hills.

The groans of the man beside him recalled him from his reveries of the past to the vivid present. The hand of the dying soldier was extended and his pleading eyes asked that he might hold again the object of his worship.

"Brother!" burst impulsively from John's lips, with a sob as he returned the prize. "To think that we should have met here and at such a time!"

* * * * *

The night was over and the last pale stars were sinking into oblivion when the field was astir with ambulances and soldiers returning to bury, as best they could, their dead. Unfeeling were they and hardened to sights of horror, but the sternest of these paused in wonderment when they came upon the forms of two soldiers—the one a Frenchman, the other clad in an Austrian uniform—dead in each others arms. But they did not tarry to unfold the mystery; and it was the sun alone, as he peeped once again into the world, who knew their secret.

Mildred W. Dickinson

"These Three"

When a mother sends her son to war,
She bids him always think of her;
She prays that God will help him fight,
And that he'll always do the right.

—This, my friend, is Faith.

And, when no word of him she hears,
She still has faith and sheds no tears,
But always prays and hopes that he
Ere long will gain the victory—

—What she has is Hope.

And if, 'midst all the grief and pain,
Her mind and heart have one same strain—
To live for him, to work and pray,
To give her heart and life away,

—This, O God, is Love!

—*Anonymous.*

"There's Many a Slip"

I.

IT WAS a damp, rainy evening in October. All outside was cold and dreary. A gray fog had settled heavily over the village; a fog that foretold the early coming of night. From the window of a tiny cottage gleamed a light through the rain and mist, which told of the warmth and comfort within. A bright fire crackled cheerfully on the hearth. A cat snoozed peacefully on the hearth-rug, dreaming of catnip, of feasting on mice and having other pleasant visions of Catland. The other occupant was Jane Woodson, an elderly spinster, who sat by the blazing fire reading the "Evening Times." She was tall in stature and comparatively slender. Her hair, of a grayish color, was parted in the middle, and drawn severely back from a high forehead, and brushed into two cork-screw curls which bobbed over each shoulder. Her tiny eyes, dark and snapping, were eagerly scanning the advertisement columns in search of bargains and remnants. Suddenly, with an indignant exclamation, she turned to her brother, who had just entered the room.

"Well, of all things, Richard Woodson, just listen to this:

" 'A lonesome bachelor, matrimonially inclined, desires to meet a capable and industrious woman with whom he would like to share his life and fortune. Meet me at the rustic bridge, Wednesday night, at nine o'clock.'

"How any self-respecting, sober-minded citizen could stoop to do such an unmanly thing, is more than I can understand. A man, actually not having any more sense than to put such an advertisement in the paper! Richard Woodson, I should certainly be

ashamed of my sex. The idea of a person not having any more decency than to conduct himself in such a manner! Why, do you think a young girl, with any maidenly propriety, would lower herself to even read such as that? It is certainly offensive to the modesty of any girl who would think of regarding it seriously. If one of my sex had written such a thing, I would never say I was a woman." With this parting shot, she majestically left the room, her curls bobbing indignantly over her shoulders, and each step telling of her disgust.

Richard, undisturbed, sat gazing thoughtfully into the fire. The rain pattered drowsily upon the roof. The wet vines tapped ghost-like, with their long green fingers, against the panes as if asking admittance to the cheer and warmth. His meditation was interrupted by Billy-boy, who jumped upon his knee and began purring softly.

Stooping, Richard picked up the paper, read the advertisement, and laughed heartily.

"'Tis a shame, old boy," he said, tenderly stroking the cat, "that such lonely old bachelors as me should be forced to disown our sex. But, we are content with our pipe and cheerful fireside, without another one of the fair sex to deliver us such a lecture as we have just heard. We'll let them alone, Pal."

II.

Wednesday night. Dark clouds are chasing each other swiftly across the sky. Occasionally the smiling face of the moon may be seen peeping from the scurrying clouds. A soft wind rises and, with a sudden puff, it sends down a shower of autumn leaves across the moonlit path. From the distance comes the mournful lowing of cows, which only adds to the solitude of the night.

A stately figure, closely muffled and veiled, comes slowly down the pathway. Glancing to her right and left, she quickens her footsteps. A tiny rabbit, hurry-

ing his homeward way, causes her to give a startled scream, but, trembling with fear and nervousness, she reaches the bridge. Peeping into the shadows, she finds that she is alone, and leaning on the railing, she is frightened at the reflection of the moon in the clear water beneath and the shadows hovering on the surface. She looks until she grows dizzy, and, in her giddiness and excitement, she hears approaching footsteps. Clinging to the railing for support, she longs for a place of concealment. In the dim light of the moon, she beholds an erect figure.

"And so Fate has directed you thus far," he began in deep, man-like tones. "This same Fate will direct us to the end; and as this seems to be our destiny, let us behold ourselves as we really are."

With trembling hands, she lifts her veil and, for a breathless moment, the two gaze into each other's eyes.

The man is the first to break the silence of surprise and disappointment.

"Great Heavens! 'Tis my Sister Jane!"

The Surprise

THE day on which Florine left home and went away to college was a memorable day for many people. A large crowd had gathered at the station in the small town to give her a last farewell look and to wish her a successful year. Mrs. McCall's sadness was evident and, at the last minute, even Florine herself became unusually quiet and had to try very hard before she could keep the tears from streaming down her cheeks. The young girls and boys hated to see the best-loved and most popular member of their club leave them. Nevertheless, they tried to lighten her spirits by reminding her of the good time she would have on the train and after she reached college.

For the first few days after her departure, time dragged for Mrs. McCall and Johnny, the dearly loved little brother whom Florine had petted all her life. Every bit of sunshine seemed to have disappeared from their home. However, with Florine's first letter to them both, they began to realize how nice it was for her to have the advantages of college life, so they forgot their loneliness and began planning for the time when she would return for the Christmas holiday.

Johnny went to the public school every day, so his mother was left alone practically all day. For this reason she arranged to board the new school teacher, a very young girl not much older than Florine and who was delighted to secure a place in the lovely home. Her name was Betty Randolph. She had completed the high school course, but had never been financially able to go to college. She hoped to save enough money by teaching to send herself there for at least one year. She was a lovely girl and the people of the town became acquainted with her quickly and began to love her.

It was not long before Christmas, and everybody was getting excited, as usual. Johnny was delighted about getting holiday from school, and his mother was looking forward to having Florine at home again. Miss Randolph left before Florine returned.

Florine reached home a week before Christmas and was very excited and thrilled to be there. She had been away for three long months and had missed the home ties and the tenderness of her mother. The first few days were spent delightfully in walking around the familiar places and seeing her old friends. She told her mother all about the college, her friends among the girls there, about her work, and last but not least, about a young man whom she had met. She talked on and on to both Johnny and Mrs. McCall and told them how much she had missed them. Then her conversation went back to Richard.

"Why, Johnny, you ought to see him; he as a wonder. He is really tall and *awfully* good-looking."

"Where did you happen to meet him?" Mrs. McCall asked.

"Well, I met him on the train, on my way to school. One of the girls introduced me to him and I have liked him ever since. He has been lovely to me."

"Does he go to college, somewhere?" Johnny wanted to know.

"No. He has finished college and is working in a little town not far from our college. He's a doctor, you know; and had to work *awfully* hard to get started. He sent himself to school, too—I've talked enough about myself now. How have you two spent your time?"

Her mother answered, "Well, we have become so interested in Betty that we seem to have spent all our time with her. She is a lovely girl, and I want you to know her. It will help you to be associated with her, I am sure—she is so thoughtful and unselfish. I know she has won the heart of every one in town, by this time."

"Oh, she must be a wonder. I'm afraid everybody will forget me by the time I come back in June."

Everywhere Florine went she heard the praises of Betty, until she finally acknowledged to herself that she was tired of it. She was a little angry to think that the people did not seem to realize that she was a *college* girl and that Betty Randolph was only a school teacher.

On Christmas day Florine received a letter from Richard, who wanted to know if he might visit her in her home the day before she returned to school, and go back to school with her. Following the letter came a beautiful box of flowers with his card. Florine told her mother, who was indeed glad that she would have an opportunity to see this man in whom her daughter was so interested.

Before the time came Mrs. McCall received a note from Betty who said that she would return on the day before Florine would leave. This news was welcomed by Johnny and Mrs. McCall, and by Florine apparently; but when the latter was in her room alone she almost wept, because she did not want to see this girl, who seemed to be taking her place in the town and partly in her own home, and she didn't want Richard to know her, either. However, she dared not let anyone know how she felt about it, and she hated to acknowledge that she was jealous.

The morning of the day on which Richard would arrive was a busy day for the household. Mrs. McCall was busy trying to see that the house was properly arranged before Florine's company came, and Florine herself was busy packing her trunk. All of a sudden it occurred to her that Betty and Richard might come on the same train. She worried herself sick, because she was so afraid that Richard would immediately fall in love with Betty and forget that he ever cared for her. She brooded over it, and finally decided that she would go to meet the train herself.

It took her a long time to get dressed, but she hurried as quickly as she could. When she finally jumped in the machine and started the engine, she heard the train whistle blow. Before she got to the station, the train had stopped and the people were on their way to their respective houses. Florine looked around searchingly and finally saw Richard walking down the street with a very good looking young girl, neatly and attractively dressed. Her heart jumped.

"I *know* she met him on the train and has captivated him by this time. I hope he doesn't like her, tho—!" Florine thought right quickly. Then she turned her machine and decided to overtake Betty and Richard. Just as she drove up behind them, she heard Betty say, "Oh, Dick, I'm ever so glad. Of course you know I'll be crazy about it."

Florine was furious to think that Betty Randolph actually called him "Dick!"

"Hello, Richard," she called.

Richard and Betty both turned and hurried toward Florine, who by this time was standing on the ground.

After Richard had shaken hands and spoken with Florine, he turned to Betty and said, "Now, Betsy, I want you to meet Florine. And, Florine, Betsy is my little sister. I am so glad that you two can know each other"

"You sweet child; I'm glad to meet you," was all Florine could murmur.

—*Anonymous.*

"There Was a Little Girl"

NEARLY nineteen years ago a very fat, curly haired little baby lay quite contented in her old fashioned crib, winking and blinking at the light with her very blue eyes. I know she was a fat curly haired baby, because she is a fat curly haired young lady now, and she has not changed in that respect, I'm sure. Little did this baby think, as it lay there, that you should ever read what she has written, so she did not bother her curly head.

This little baby grew and grew, until she was big enough to go to school. She went, like most little girls, in her blue apron and the same curls of her babyhood; only now they were tied with a high blue bow to match her eyes.

She went to school every year and studied in all the grades. She would come back home in the evenings, and her mother would meet her at the same gate and kiss her. They had the most fun ever—just those two, because the little girl did not have any sister and her mother had to be a little girl and play with her.

Once, when the little girl was almost ten years old, she was quite sick and the doctors came and sent for a pretty nurse all dressed in white, and every one had to talk so quietly in the nursery because the little girl was very ill. She stayed in bed from Thanksgiving until the next spring, and then she began to improve. After she became strong enough to walk, she found that she was quite a large little girl; but then, oh dear! her curls—every one—fell right out—and she did not have any hair at all; and the next fall when she went to school, she had to wear a little red crocheted cap to keep the big boys from laughing at her bald head. There was just one boy in school

who did not laugh at her bald head, and she liked him ever so much for it, too.

The big "little" girl was very busy, going to school in winter and staying at the seashore in summer. You see, she always lived in the same old-fashioned home in the country and did not move, like nice factory people, from one little house to another. So nothing exciting ever happened. She just lived there, contented, until one day her mother said:

"My dear, you are fifteen years old today, and I must make your dresses longer."

So she did, and the little girl was very unhappy and she went up stairs and cried. While she was alone she thought of the little boy who did not laugh at her bald head and wished she could see him, for she knew the boys in high school would laugh at her long dresses, and she also knew that he would not laugh if he were there. But he had moved away, like the nice factory people! So she cried herself to sleep.

Then the big "little" girl just kept right on going to school and holding up those long skirts, and pinning them up, because she hated them so. The time fairly flew, and soon the time came for her to graduate from her high school. And do you know, that on the very day she was to graduate she received a letter which made her feel—oh, so queer, when she read it. Then there came a long narrow box, among the rest of the boxes which she had been getting all day. She opened every one of them before she did this particular one and then she opened it, very slowly. It was filled with just white roses.

"But they were so sweet," the little girl graduate said, and hurrying away, she put them in water herself.

All that evening she had a very queer feeling, because of what that letter said and the way the roses smelled; and she felt like she was just floating in the air all the time. Then she had to dress in a simple white frock with the long skirt (oh, how she hated

it!) full of ruffles. She wore her curls down (you know they had all grown back again).

She went with her mother and father to the town hall, where she still floated through everything. She said her speech and listened to the tall man with spectacles who talked to her class about the first steps to some kind of ladder. She hoped she would climb all the way up sometime, but she was sure she never could in that long dress. Indeed she felt very much that, if she stopped for a moment, she would float up there now, instead of taking years to do it like he said. Then the man handed her a long roll, and—Oh joy! everybody was kissing her now and (could she believe her ears?) somewhere a voice was saying something she wanted to hear very much. How she wished everybody would hush except that voice! The crowd around her remained for a while, and then they began to thin out, and she could hear more of that voice; and once, she got a look into those eyes, and they looked just like they did when all the boys except this one laughed at her bald head.

She just kept on floating until that voice said reproachfully: "You have not even shaken hands with me."

She shook his hand and it felt so cold that she tried to drop it, but she could not do so very quickly, because he held hers too tightly. Then he said:

"Goodness! how you have grown! You are a young lady in long dresses now. I'm sure your father will let me call on his grown daughter in long skirts."

My! how she loved those skirts now! And she just floated and floated all through that glorious short summer of sunny days and moonlight nights, until the day before she was to leave for college, where she must climb the ladder the man in glasses talked about the night she graduated. One day, she almost stopped floating for a little while, when she thought of leaving her home, but just then the door-bell rang and she heard a voice saying that someone was to

leave for South America immediately. Then she felt like lead through and through, and was sure she would sink; and everywhere grew as black as night; she could hear people talking far away; then all went black.

When she opened her eyes she was lying on her bed, and the man whom she had heard talking was sitting by her side. Then her mother tipped out of the room, and she began to float all over again.

That was a wonderful evening. They talked together for a long time, then he said he must go. That was when he told her such wonderful things and just made her want to begin climbing up that ladder right away. He promised that he would climb, too, and insisted that he must be there to help her climb lest those long skirts trip her progress. She told him that she would not fall at all, but would climb alone in her gym suit; and he just laughed at her. They planned it all out, that she was to climb up in her gym suit, and all the time she must try to float. They agreed that this would be very hard, but she promised she would try, and so they settled it.

The little curly-haired girl cannot tell us any more now, but sometime she will write all about what a time she had trying to float. You know how it is, if you ever have "floated!" And every girl floats at one time or another. Even old maid school teachers floated when they were young.

Clara Neblett

THE FOCUS

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 2nd day of October, 1912.
J. L. BUGG, Notary Public.

Entered as second-class matter at the postoffice at Farmville, Virginia

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Editorial

THE SCHOOL TEACHER

My! what a short summer we have had! And now we find ourselves away from home again. It is a new experience to a great many girls here and quite a commonplace experience to a number of others. But whether old or new, we are all here for the same purpose. Each one of us is taking advantage of an opportunity which will not only mean a great deal to us but to America.

It does seem queer that school teachers can be of as much service to Uncle Sam as men who wear uniforms, but they can be. They are to be given the privilege of helping determine what kind of a future this Republic will have. They are to teach the future leaders of this nation.

We just *must* realize our responsibility here at this school. It is staring each one of us in the face. We cannot evade it.

Now at the beginning of a new school year, we must wake up to the fact that we have "our bit" to do and that the size of this "bit" is to be determined by *you*.

Girls! Let's be serious!

G. L.

* *
*

HOW SCHOOL GIRLS CAN SERVE THEIR COUNTRY

Every school girl desires to be of service to her country in this world-wide crisis. She offers to do patriotic duty of every kind, from gardening to driving motor trucks and filling the positions of office men. There is a scarcity of labor everywhere and such inducements as were never known before are being offered to workers who are willing to fill the vacancies. There has been, perhaps, many a girl tempted to stay out of school, this year, by opportunities to make money or by what seemed to her to be her patriotic duty. However, you did the very best service you can perform for your country at this time by returning to school this year. The call of the country after the war will be for educated and efficiently trained young men and women, and if the boys and girls leave the schools there will be none to answer the call. The President, in a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, in regard to the unnecessarily diminished supply of students, advised that "the young people who are leaving high schools be particularly urged to avail themselves of the opportunity offered by colleges and technical schools to the end that our country may not lack an adequate supply of trained men and women." It is said that there never was a time when the nation needed a full attendance in school so much as it does today. After the war, problems will arise which will demand just as high standards of intelligence and responsibilities of citi-

zenship as we have heretofore experienced. These problems will have to be solved by today's young men and women.

By remaining in school this year, we are not slackers. It is not an exciting or heroic work, but it is the kind of work most needed of us from our country. We have made one big step towards serving our country and that is our entering school this fall. Now it is up to us to take every advantage of our opportunities. This year will mean nothing to ourselves or to others if we waste our time. We have splendid opportunities here to develop into efficient teachers to go out into the State to teach the future citizens of the Nation. Therefore, let us make the best of our opportunities and become the efficiently trained women that our country needs.

F. W.

* * * Here and There * * *

The following second year professional officers have been elected:

President, Virginia Bain.
Vice-President, Inza Lea.
Secretary, Anne Gregory.
Treasurer, Katherine Anderson.
Reporter, Annette Alexander.

The first-year professional officers are as follows:

President, Virginia Howison.
Vice-President, Patty Buford.
Secretary, Catherine Shield.
Treasurer, Ava Marshall.
Reporter, Jozie Harrell.

Fourth-year officers:

President, Elizabeth Lewis.
Vice-President, Mary Moore.
Secretary, Carolyn Burgess.
Treasurer, Endie Sargent.

Third-year officers:

President, Sarah Hughes.
Vice-President, Margaret Stiger.
Secretary-Treasurer, Elizabeth Mooring.

The following new officers were elected to serve on the Focus Staff:

Exchange Editor, Ava Marshall.
Assistant Exchange Editor, Nellie Layne.
News Editor, Katherine Field.
Assistant News-Editor, Helen Shepherd.

REPRESENTATION OF THE MAJOR WORK CARRIED ON BY THE Y. W. C. A.

On Wednesday evening, October the third, the Y. W. C. A. gave a presentation of the different phases of its work throughout the world. The program consisted of short speeches given by the girls, who were dressed in costumes to represent the various branches of activity of the Y. W. C. A. The work represented was, Finance, Business, Secretarial, Field, Convention and Conference, Foreign, City, Immigrant, Colored, Indian, War Relief, and Publicity.

Special music was rendered by Misses Jessie Brett and Louise Garrett.

* * * * **Hit or Miss** * * * *

A new girl looked worried at the breakfast table. When asked what was the matter she said: "Mrs. Slater knocked on our door last night after light bell for the noise to stop."

"That's nothing," said Jo, "Jerome pecks on my door every night."

You Just Try It.

New Girl.—"I've got to get some tennis shoes for gymnasium."

Old Girl.—"Do you want me to go down town with you to get them?"

New Girl.—"Down town! Can't you get them at the Book Room from Miss Taliaferro?"

To fall in love is awfully simple.
To fall out is simply awful.

Now, How?

Billy—"Did you hear that Reginald has had to have his left arm taken off at the wrist?"

Willy—"That's a pity. How can the dear boy tell time?"

Heard on Main Hall.

Mildred—"Louise, what are you going to do to-night?"

Louise—"Be in the pantomime."

Mildred—"Are you going to sing?"

Town boy, holding a box with excelsior coming out—"What's the matter, Polly?"

Polly—"Nothing, only what in the world have you in that box?"

Boy—"A window pane. I'm going to set up light housekeeping."

This Year's Model

The fussy old gentleman asked the chance traveling companion: "Have you any children, sir?"

"Yes sir; a son."

"Does he smoke?"

"Ah, sir, he never so much as touched a cigarette."

"So much the better, sir; the use of tobacco is a poisonous habit. Does he frequent clubs?"

"He has never put his foot in one."

"Allow me to congratulate you. Does he never come home late?"

"Never. He goes to bed directly after dinner."

"A model young man, sir, a model young man. How old is he?"

"Just six months."

I asked Helen why she was taking Botany, and she answered, "Because my fiance is interested in a plant of some kind, and I want to be able to converse with him intelligently about his business."

Mr. Grainger, assigning the next lesson.—"Study the introduction to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and any other of Shakespeare's works."

Student-teacher, springing the question on a boy who wasn't paying attention: "Why was it that we knew so little about other countries four hundred years ago, James?"

"Please, teacher," answered James without a moment's hesitation, "because we weren't born."

—*Borrowed.*

Wouldn't Work Twice

In a Canadian camp somewhere in England a second George Washington has been found. He, in company with several others, had been granted four days' leave, and, as usual, wired for extension. But no hackneyed excuse was his. In fact, it was so original that it has been framed and now hangs in a prominent spot in the battalion orderly-room. It ran as follows:

"Nobody dead, nobody ill; still going strong, having a good time, and got plenty of money. Please grant extension."

And he got it.

Mr. S., calling the roll—Miss Cobb, Miss Peacock, Miss Hoge, Miss Bugg, Miss Wyatt, etc.

Miss Wyatt—Laura, what would Mr. Somers do if the Peacock ate the Bugg?

When kissing he'd often missplace 'em,
On shoulder or neck he'd waste 'em,
Until Betty sighed and hungrily cried,
"Please put 'em on where I can taste 'em."

Miss Munoz—"Susie, name the lines."

Susie—"E, g, b, d, g."

Miss Munoz—"How do you get that?"

Susie—"Every good boy does good."

Is It Good to Eat, Helen?

H. Shepherd had just told the second grade children in music class a story about squirrels and nuts.

"Now let's pretend you're squirrels and these notes are nuts and you're going to get them. Now, this is a do-nut."

And the Boy Got It

A hungry traveler put his head out of a car window as his train pulled up at a small station, and said to a boy: "Here, boy, take this dime and get me a sandwich, will you? And, by the way, here's another dime. Get a sandwich for yourself, too."

The boy darted away and returned, munching a sandwich, just as the train was starting off. He ran to the traveler, handed him a dime, and said: "Here's yer dime back, boss. They only had one sandwich left."

Specially Endowed

"Some un sick at yo' house, Mis' Carter?" inquired Lila. "Ah seed the doctah's kyar eroun dar yestidy."

"It was for my brother, Lila."

"Sho! What's he done got the matter of 'em?"

"Nobody seems to know what the disease is. He can eat and sleep as well as ever, he stays out all day long on the veranda in the sun and seems as well as any one, but he can't do any work, at all."

"He cain't, yo' says, he cain't work."

"Not a stroke."

"Law, Miss Carter, dat ain't no disease what you' broth' got. Dat's a gif'!"

Where Women Failed

At a military tribunal in the border district the other day, one member asked the applicant, a shepherd, if he knew the reason why his work should not be undertaken by a woman.

"A woman once tried it," replied the applicant, "and she made a mess of it."

"Who was she?" inquired the chairman.

"'Bo-Peep'," answered the shepherd.

Next!

The story of the rival book-makers, which appeared recently, is matched by a correspondent of an English paper with another story, equally old, but equally worth repeating. It concerns two rival sausage makers. Again, they lived on opposite sides of a certain street, and, one day, one of them placed over his shop the legend: "We sell sausages to the gentry and nobility of the country."

Next day, over the way, appeared the sign: "We sell sausage to the gentry of the whole country."

Not to be outdone, the rival put up what he evidently regarded as a final statement, namely: "We sell sausages to the King."

Next day there appeared over the door of the first sausage-maker the simple expression of loyalty: "God save the King."

New Girl—"Why does Julia Stover always look so happy on Sunday?"

Old Girl—"Because she has her 'Holiday' then."

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ Exchanges ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

The summer copies of the *Southwest Standard* are well gotten up, and many of the articles reveal quite a depth of thought back of them; but don't you think it would add to the interest of your publication if you would put in a wide-awake story now and then, and a few more original poems? You might also group your notes instead of putting Society Notes on one page, Faculty Notes on another, and so on. Not that the appearance of your publication is detracted from by the present arrangement, but sometimes after we think we've read them all we run across some more just by accident.

We like the June issue of *The Student* very much. It shows originality of thought and careful preparation on the part of both the contributors and the editors, and is quite attractively arranged. "The Voyage of Class '17" is deserving of special mention. The figurative language in which it is written makes it all the more interesting, especially as the figures of speech are well carried out in every instance.

The Blue and Gold, also, is very interesting, and quite uniquely arranged. The editorials are good, especially "The Call to Service" which urges upon students the need of active leadership in the home community, and points out the joy as well as the necessity of service. "Woman Suffrage" is an article deserving of comment. The point at issue is quite ably discussed from the writer's point of view, and a few of his arguments "strike home," but perhaps not all of them.

The Hollins Magazine for May-June has quite an abundance of delightful stories and essays, but where are your poems? Your magazine is quite noticeably deficient along this line, tho "God's Breath," the one poem printed, is quite good. The magazine, as a whole, is truly literary in style and content, and deserving merit. The story "Miss Julia's Son" is strongly written, and is somewhat characteristic of the modern short story.

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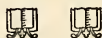
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